

***Clearing Off*, Charles Harold Davis**

Charles Harold Davis (1856-1933) was a member of an artistic movement known as American Impressionism. He painted *Clearing Off* when he was approximately 69 years old. We have chosen this work for our backdrop for Aging Activities at the National Center for Health Statistics (CDC) because we feel that the portrayal of a classic American landscape captures the serenity and repose that can come with healthy aging. The creation and appreciation of art can extend well into the later years.



Clearing Off, Charles Harold Davis (c. 1925)
The Cooley Gallery, Old Lyme, CT

Davis was born in Amesbury, Massachusetts. He became interested in art at a young age and was inspired to pursue training after attending an exhibit of French Barbizon painting in Boston. Shortly thereafter, he enrolled as a student at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston where he studied under Otto Grundmann (1844-1890). In 1881, Davis went to Paris and remained there for close to a decade, studying at the Academie Julian.

Davis returned to the United States in 1890 and settled in Mystic, Connecticut, where he resided for the

rest of his career. In Connecticut, Davis's landscapes shifted in style from tonal Barbizon to Impressionist, and by 1895 he turned his focus to a specific theme—cloudscapes, for which he is best known. In these richly colored, sun-filled paintings of the Connecticut countryside, Davis depicts low horizons and big skies filled with dancing clouds that cast shadows across the landscape.

Around the turn of the century American Impressionist artists had begun to congregate in Connecticut, with its gentle countryside, beautiful coastline, and easy access to New York City. Davis became the leading figure of a colony of artists in Mystic that also included David Walkley and John Joseph Enneking. Another colony appeared in Old Lyme, centered on artists such as Childe Hassam, Theodore Robinson, J. Alden Weir, John Twachtman, and Willard Metcalf.

Many of these artists' works can still be viewed in galleries and museums in Connecticut and across the country. You may wish to visit <http://www.tfaoi.com/aa/1aa/1aa604.htm> to learn more about the Connecticut impressionists and a recent exhibition of their work at the New Britain (CT) Museum of American Art. The web site of the Connecticut Impressionist Art Trail at <http://www.arttrail.org/> also provides information on this movement and a guide to the museums in that state displaying their works.

Our thanks to The Cooley Gallery, of Old Lyme, CT, for permission to use the image of *Clearing Off* and for their help in providing information about the artist.